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Ministry of Forests and Range

FIVE COMMUNITIES OFFERED JOINT FOREST AGREEMENT

BARRIERE – The Province has offered the communities of Barriere, Chu Chua, Little Fort, Louis Creek and McLure a five-year probationary community forest agreement aimed, in part, at harvesting beetle wood in the area, Kamloops-North Thompson MLA Kevin Krueger announced today.

"This agreement speaks to the teamwork of the five communities that are working together with the Province to stimulate the area's economy and contribute to the management of beetle wood in the Lower North Thompson area," Krueger said.

The agreement grants the Lower North Thompson Community Forest Society, which is jointly managed by the five communities, the right to an annual harvest up to 75,000 cubic metres of timber on public forest lands. The agreement targets the harvest of timber affected by the mountain pine beetle by specifying that a maximum of 20,000 of the 75,000 cubic metres can be of non-pine species. The agreement notes that after the beetle salvage work is complete, the annual harvest rights will be adjusted to a maximum of 20,000 cubic metres.

"The community forest is really appropriately named," said Ronald Hindson, chairman of the Lower North Thompson Community Forest Society. "It is only through the dedication and hard work of all involved that we're able to create and support local jobs in the sector and increase our role in the forest stewardship of the Lower North Thompson."

Probationary community forest agreements are a form of legal tenure by which the Province transfers decision-making to communities that wish to more fully participate in the stewardship of local Crown forest resources. They are area-based, and give communities exclusive rights to harvest timber, as well as the opportunity to manage forest resources such as timber and botanical forest products, recreation, wildlife, water and scenic viewscapes.

Community forests are intended to stimulate long-term employment, forest-related education and skills training as well as other social, environmental and economic benefits, while meeting environmental stewardship standards. After an initial term of five years, the agreements may be extended for an additional term of five years or replaced with a long-term agreement of not less than 25 years.

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